COURSE OUTLINE

Effective: Spring 2022

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title: Digital Culture   **Course Number:** CMNS 253   **Credits:** 3

Total Weeks: 14 (Fall, Spring)   12 (Summer)   **Total Hours:** 39

Course Level:
☐ First Year   ☒ Second Year
☐ New   ☐ Revised Course
☐ Replacement Course

Department: Humanities   **Department Head:** P. Best   **Former Course Code(s) and Number(s) (if applicable):** N/A

Pre-requisites (If there are no prerequisites, type NONE): CMNS 110 or CMNS 130 or equivalent

Co-requisite Statement (List if applicable or type NONE): NONE

Precluded Courses: N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will cover topics examining the relationship between digital communications media and contemporary society. It will focus on aspects of digital culture and society related to the development and characteristics of online communities through mobile devices, social media, and other popular and emerging digital media technologies that facilitate so much of contemporary communications. It will examine phenomena and societal structures around digital media and society from the mundane through to the profound, from the global to the local, to the individual. It will take a critical perspective on digital cultures and explore topics including the datafication of everyday human relationships, the relationship between social media and politics, the changing face of digital labour and content production for media technologies, and many other key issues in our ubiquitously connected world.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify and demonstrate their understanding of key theories and concepts regarding the relationship between digital media technologies and society.

- Be self-reflective about their own engagement with digital media technologies.

- Demonstrate the ability to apply academic concepts to the critical analysis of practical examples of digital communications media.

- Produce arguments that demonstrate the development of their own critical perspective on digital media technologies and society.

- Find and evaluate the relevance of additional academic resources and apply them to topics from the course.

- Further develop interdisciplinary academic and transferrable skills.

INSTRUCTION AND GRADING

Instructional (Contact) Hours:

Type	Duration
Lecture/Seminars	39
Laboratory	0
Field Experience	0
Other (specify):	0
Total	39

Grading System: Letter Grades ☒   Percentage ☐ Pass/Fail ☐   Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory ☐   Other ☐

Specify passing grade: 50%

Evaluation Activities and Weighting (total must equal 100%)

Assignments:	65%
Specify number of, variety, and nature of assignments:	
Daily log	5%
In-class reports	25%
Content creation & presentation	30%
Participation	5%
Final Assessment (exam):	35%

TEXT(S) AND RESOURCE MATERIALS

Readings and resources for this course will be available through MyCC – Coquitlam College's Moodle-based virtual learning environment (VLE). The assigned readings are indicated in the course content information below.

COURSE TOPICS

Week	Topic	Assigned readings	Supplementary readings
Week 1	**Convergence** culture, media & technology, datafication, remix culture, and creativity.	Harvey, Alison. "Feminist Digital Media Studies". *Feminist Media Studies* (Polity: 2020) pp 112-141.	Jenkins, Henry. "What Constitutes Meaningful Participation?". *Spreadable Media* (NYU: 2013) pp 153-194.
Week 2	**Communities.** Social and technological networks, interpersonal communication, and context collapse.	Baym, Nancy. "Communication in digital spaces". *Personal Connections in the Digital Age* (Polity, Cambridge: 2010) pp 50-71.	Marwick, Alice, and boyd, danah. "I Tweet Honestly, I Tweet Passionately". *New Media & Society* 13, no1 (2010) pp 1-20.
Week 3	**Privacy**. Value and the commodification of data, surveillance, and the panopticon.	Zuboff, Shoshana. "Chapter 3: The Discovery of Behavioral Surplus". *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* (Public Affairs, NY: 2019) pp 65-97.	Doctorow, Cory. "Network Effects vs. Switching Costs". *The Internet Con* (Verso: 2023) pp 26-37.
Week 4	**Design I.** Affordances & constraints, design art and fashion, skeuomorphism, maximalism & minimalism.	Murray, Janet. "Maximizing the Four Affordances". *Inventing the Medium: Principles of interaction design as a cultural practice* (MIT Press: 2012) pp 87-103.	Greenfield, Adam. "Smartphone: The Networking of the Self". *Radical Technologies: The Design of Everyday Life* (Verso: 2018) pp 9-29.
Week 5	**Design II.** Notifications and hook cycles, the power of defaults, dark patterns, platforms as digital spaces.	Nagy, Peter, and Neff, Gina. "Imagined Affordance: Reconstructing a Keyword for Communication Theory". *Social Media & Society* 1, no2 (2015) pp 1-9.	Airoldi, Massimo. "A Theory of Machine Habitus". *Machine Habitus* (Polity: 2022) pp 109-143.
Week 6	**Media archaeology.** Obsolescence, linkrot, emulators, and digital archives.	Sobchak, Vivian. "Afterward: Media Archaeology and Re-presencing the Past". In: Huhtamo, Erkki, and Parikka, Jussi. *Media Archaeology* (University of California: 2011) pp 323-334.	Citton, Yves, "Archeologizing Mediarchy". *Mediarchy* (Polity: 2019) pp 145-156.

Week 7	**The uncanny**. Computer animation in film, TV, & games, VR, AR, and the uncanny valley.	Bode, Lisa. "The Uncanny Valley". In: Dobson, Nichola et al (eds) *The Animation Studies Reader* (Bloomsbury: 2022) pp 59-68.	Mori Masahiro. "The Uncanny Valley". *IEEE Robotics & Automation*, June (2012) pp 98-100.
Week 8	**Platforms & commons**. Consolidation, walled gardens, and digital ecosystems. Copyright, intellectual property, the GPL, creative commons, and open-source.	Van Dijck, Jose. "The Ecosystem of Connective Media". *The Culture of Connectivity* (Oxford: 2013) pp 154-176.	O'Shea, Lizzie. "Protect the Digital Commons!". *Future Histories* (Verso, London: 2019) pp 239-260.
Week 9	**Industry & Governance**. Infrastructure, public & private regulations. Digital industries, content aggregation, and monopolization.	Poell, Thomas, Nieborg, David, and Duffy, Brooke. "Governance". *Platforms and Cultural Production* (Polity: 2022) pp 79-105.	Barbrook, Richard, and Cameron, Andy. "The Californian Ideology." *Science as Culture* 6, no. 1 (1996) pp 44-72.
Week 10	**Journalism**. Information overload, the digital public sphere, alternative & citizen journalism.	Andrejevic, Mark. "Cutting through the Glut: Knowledge Small Enough to Know". *Infoglut* (Routledge, NY: 2013) pp 136-165.	Boeder, Peter. "Habermas' heritage: The future of the public sphere in the network society". *First Monday*, 10, no9 (2005).
Week 11	**Labour**. Content creation, the gig economy, and precarity.	Appadurai, Arjun, and Alexander, Neta. "Creative Destruction and the New Socialities". *Failure* (Polity: 2020) pp 46-69.	Johnson, Mark, Carrigan, Mark, and Brock, Tom. "The Imperative to be Seen". *First Monday*, 24, no8 (2019).
Week 12	**Presentations.**	No reading assigned.	No reading assigned.
Week 13	**Revision** and final exam preparation.	No reading assigned.	No reading assigned.
Week 14	**Exam**	No reading assigned.	No reading assigned.

NOTES

1. Students are required to follow all College policies. Policies are available on the website at: Coquitlam College Policies
2. To find out how this course transfers, visit the BC Transfer Guide at: bctransferguide.ca

Last Revised: January 2022
Last Reviewed: September 2024